NUMBER 18

NEAR MINT

A FA UDENTS FANS PROS COMIC BOOKS OLD MOVIES ART

THIS ISSUE.....BOB POWELL

$3

NEAR MINT

A FANZINE FOR STUDENTS FANS PROS COMIC BOOKS OLD MOVIES ART

AN AL DELLINGES PUBLICATION

NEAR MINT is a new magazine devoted to thoes who love good art, good old movies and good comic related stories, where ever thay may be found. I grew up with comics and great films, most of which were produced in the late thirties and forties. In searching for material for this book, I've come accross tons of gret features and articles that have been hidden too long. Our purpose is to share this entertainment with our readers and they can help by sharing thier long lost art related stories with us. If there's a memory of sorts, that brings a snicker or chuckle to the jaw line, send it along. If you send art work, please do not send originals, prints and good Xerox copies work just fine for reproductive purposes.

Next issue

ISSUE #19..Prince Valiant

NEAR MINT is published approximately eight times a year by Al Dellinges Publications, P. O. Box 34158, San Francisco, California 94134. Single copies, $3.50 postpaid, mailed first class. Return postage must accompany all submissions if they are to be returned and no responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials. *Copyright 1980 by Al Dellinges. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication in any form, may be duplicated, without the express written consent of the publishers.*

NEAR MINT DECEMBER 1981

POWELL REMENBERED: AN INDEX TO HIS WORKS

Compiled By

ED LANE

Let me momentarily indulge in some personal nostalgia. I became addicted to Powell art about 1947. I thought then that Powell was one of the best comic-book artists; over three decades later I am more convinced than ever that my youthful judgement was right -- his work still ranks with the best. For 20 years Powell was so prolific that I couldn't keep up with buying all his work off the stands, 'way back then. But, I've been collecting him all these years, and I have finally decided to publish all of the data that I have accumulated.

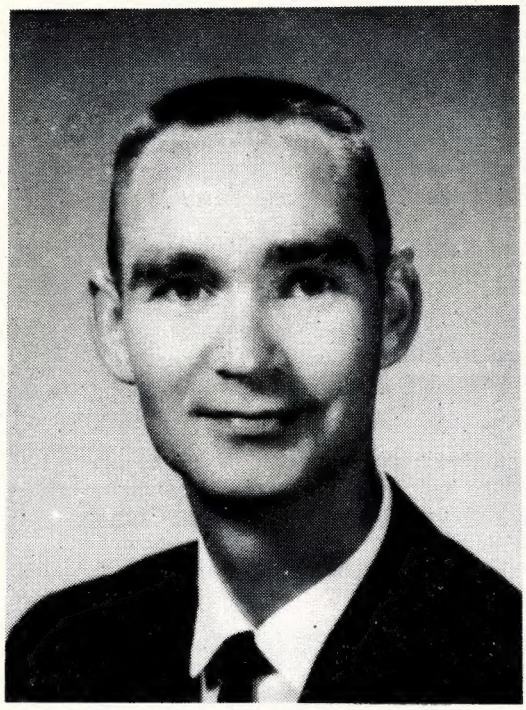
My objectives with this Index are: 1) to pay tribute to one of the all-time great comic-book artists; 2) to compile a complete Index of all his works, thereby 3) helping all of his fans who pay him greater tribute by collecting and preserving his works.

In presenting this information, I have assumed that almost everyone who reads it is acquainted with Powell's work and is, to some degree, a "fan-"atical collector of him. I further assume that all of you "fans" have shared with me the frustrations in trying to collect Powell art, simply because there has never been anything that approaches the status of a Powell Index.

As a consequence of that situation, I have utilized almost every source of information available ... I have NOT tabulated rumors. I have taken the information given me by other collectors who have checked the data from their own collections; I have tabulated data presented in various publications; but most importantly, I have acquired most of these data from my personal collection and from friends' collections that I have studied. I am confident that most of the entries are 100 percent reliable; and that those entries coded with a (?) are at least 75 percent reliable (based on my buying experiences). While there are some gaps in this Index, mainly with respect to specific stories Powell did for Quality, Harvey, and Fiction House in the early-40s, all of his major works are identified. The data listed probably represents over 90 percent of Powell's work through 1959.

And now, I make a plea. Please forward to me any other information on Powell you have which is not indexed here. Check your collection -- don't rely on memory; it is important that I hear from you, even if you have only one comic that I haven't listed. SEND: Comic title, issue number, date, the number of pages in each Powell story, and the title or brief description of the story or splash-panel. This last item is important because it will enable me to check reprints, of which there are many in slightly changed format. Personal data on Powell or his assistants are needed: dates of birth, death, dates worked with various publishers, and other trivia. With your help I know that I will eventually produce "The Complete POWELL Index."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ed Lane

Ed Lane, the compiler of the POWELL INDEX, is a 46-year-old professional geologist who is employed by the Florida Bureau of Geology in Tallahassee. He is in charge of the Bueaau's Technical Services Section, which includes their drafting, printing, and publications. He has been collecting Powell work for over 35 years and his Powell collection now numbers over 400 issues, plus uncounted numbers of xeroxed Powell stories, related references, data and trivia. Almost as consuming are his interests in collecting the "Barney Baxter" aviation adventure strip, and WW II insignia, particularly those designed by the Disney Studio. Correspondence is welcomed.

Ed Lane
1916 Hideaway Ct.
Tallahassee, FL 32303

A very special thanks to Dr. Ethan Roberts for the load of his original Powell art pages from Straight Arrow Comics that are used in this issue. Dr. Roberts has a vast collection of original art that we will be using in future issues of Near Mint.

Dr. Ethan Roberts

IN MEMORIAM

Bob Powell was art director of SICK MAGAZINE from about January 1966 until his death in 1969. The following is a partial quote from an article that was printed in SICK MAGAZINE 42, February 1966.

"S. Robert Powell is a veteran of the comic book field. For over 25 years he's been drawing comics both in book form and syndicated strips. Bob can really turn out the stuff. He's a fellow who can finish a full 4-page job overnight.

"Despite his facade of nonchalance, Bob Powell is a 100 percent dedicated craftsman, give or take a few percentage points. He has a style all his own. "Nobody else wants it," he insists. And he has a wild and zany brush technique which he attributes to the fact that he buys only wild and zany brushes. He has a vast army of imitators but he's the original.

"Some of the more popular strips he worked on were Man In Black which he recalls 'was supposed to be the Man In White but I smudged the original drawing.' Also Sheena, who was 'Queen of the Jungle,' and 'made me King of the comic-book jungle.' And Bobby Benson & The B-Bar-B Riders which he says 'had so many B's in it there's no wonder I got stung.'

"Among his more popular nationally syndicated strips were Bat Masterson and Mr. Mystic. Doing both at once used to get him confused. 'One day I had Bat receiving spirit messages from another world and Mr. Mystic was shooting it out at the O.K. Corral.'

"A graduate of Pratt Institute in New York, Bob is married to his devoted wife, Bettina. Three sons are his pride and joy. The eldest, Ensign R.R. Powell, is a jet pilot. The middle son, John, is an art major at Syracuse University. The youngest son, Kyle, is in the third grade. A new grandson, Sean, rounds out the list.

"Whenever his work and family aren't keeping him busy, Bob spends his off-hours around racing cars. He drives a Stingray and is a Director of the Bridgehampton Road Races Corporation. At one time the thought he'd become a drag racer but admits, 'racing got to be too much of a drag.'

"Before coming to SICK MAGAZINE, Bob was editor of one our competitors whose name we don't want to mention." (Author's note: He was editor at Marvel.)

POWELL was more than just an artist's signature; it represented an organization. Bob Powell had several assistants in the period of the mid-40s to the mid-50s. This is the period that I consider to have been the Golden Age of Powell. These are the vintage years that this Index will concentrate on.

Of all of his assistants, research has disclosed the following artists who probably had the longest tenures with him: George Siefringer, Martin Epp, and Howard Nostrand. A typical routine would go something like this: Powell would usually pencil-in the story and it was sent to the publisher for editing; then Powell inked the faces; Nostrand inked the figures, and Epp and Siefringer finished the backgrounds.

Howard Nostrand assisted from 1948-1952. He also did many free-lance stories for Harvey Comics' titles in the early-50s. His is the so-called "Davis-esque" style that some dealers refer to and which some tend to confuse with Powell, understandably so. He left comics about 1953 to do commercial art. After an absence of about 20 years he came back to do fine work on the short-lived Atlas TARGITT title in 1975.

Research has not been able to determine the subsequent careers of the rest of Powell's assistants ... they labored in anonymity ... created fine comics, and apparently disappeared. Regardless of what happened to them after the comic industry collapsed in the mid-50s, they left a legacy of beautiful comic art.

One of my primary motives in compiling this Index is to let it be a testimonial to them ... the anonymous craftsmen ... and to S. R. Powell who melded them, over the years, into a team that produced consistent, top quality, distinctively styled comic art.

Occasionally, however, they did get their names in print ... not as credits, but as ingredients in 'comic games' that comic book artists seem to have indulged in since the first comic book. A good example of some of these 'comic games' appeared in Street & Smith's TRUE SPORT PICTURE STORIES, issues 4/11, 4/12, 5/2. The main character was 'Slewfoot Jones,' a tall, gangling hayseed of a pitcher for a baseball team. This strip was for laughs, so anything went. In 4/11, 4/12, and 5/2, Slewfoot's team had a second-string pitcher named Nostrand. In 4/11 and 4/12, the other team's catcher is named Epp. In 4/11, the opposing team's second baseman is called Siefringer. They make themselves the butts of several boo-boos in the games of the stories. Also, I suspect there were some self-caricatures in the cartoon characters.

Powell's work appeared in just about every comic publisher that I ever heard of. I don't know if he did any work for Disney, but I wouldn't bet against it.

Powell's earliest comic-book art was done in 1939, when he worked in the Eisner-Iger shop, which supplied comics to Fiction House and Quality, among other publishers. From the beginning, his work showed a distinctive style which can be instantly recognized today as one peruses old comics of that era. The major differences between his 'early 40s' style and his 'late 40s' style are due mainly to the fact that he switched from pen to brush-inking; his stylistic flair remained the same. With the brush came a less stilted, more flowing and dynamic style; and Powell was entering what I call 'the vintage years,'

approximately from 1945-1955. Many early stories have the splash-panel byline "W. Morgan Thomas," which was either a 'shop' pen-name or one that Powell adopted for himself. For example, early 'Sheena' and 'Mr. Mystic' stories carried the "Thomas" credits; Powell's tiny signature can be found discreetly tucked away somewhere in a panel of the story.

Powell's work in Fiction House comics spanned about one and one-half years, from 1939-1941. A notable credit is his rendition of 'Gale Allen' in PLANET 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 (1940). Powell is the acknowledged top artist on 'Sheena.' He reportedly did her in JUMBO 7 and 9-27 (1939-41); and the first issue of SHEENA Comics appears to be all Powell. In JUNGLE Comics he reportedly did 'Camilla' in issues 5-9, 12, 14-16; 'ZX-5' in numbers 11, 12, 14; and 'Inspector Dayton' in numbers 11, 12, 13, 22. Powell reportedly did covers for PLANET 5-7; JUNGLE 5-8; FIGHT 5-7; and JUMBO 9, 15-17, 19.

During the early-40s Powell also contributed to Eisner's SPIRIT SECTION Sunday supplement. In its early format this had 16 pages: usually 7 or 8 pages of 'Spirit,' 4 pages of 'Lady Luck,' and 4 or 5 pages of Powell's 'Mr. Mystic.' 'Mr. Mystic' appeared in the first issue of June 2, 1940, and ran to May 14, 1944. Powell created the strip and did it until October 3, 1943, when his name last appeared on it. Fred Guardineer did an excellent job as his successor. The logo had the "Thomas" byline from the start. March 16, 1941, saw the first "Powell" byline on the logo, along with the "Thomas" house-name. Powell also did the first two pages for the December 29, 1940, 'Spirit' story, as well as other odd-jobs on the 'Spirit' stories, such as some backgrounds. (Tom Fagan did an excellent, 5-page, illustrated article on 'Mr. Mystic' for Martin Greims' COMIC CRUSADER Magazine No. 14.)

Powell did considerable work for Street & Smith publishers from 1946-1949. He worked on The SHADOW, GHOST BREAKERS, AIR ACE, RED DRAGON, TOP SECRETS of the FBI, TRUE SPORT PICTURE STORIES, and BUFFALO BILL. Of these, the stories in The SHADOW Comics ('Shadow,' 'Doc Savage,' and 'Nick Carter') rate as some of his best vintage work. Generally speaking, any of his S&S work was top-notch. At the same time he was working on The SHADOW Comics, Powell did some work for S&S's SHADOW pulp. He did only the cover for the August-September 1948 issue; this may have been the only work he did for pulps.

From 1950-1954 Powell's work was the ME comics' line-up, with him doing all of AFRICA 1, AMERICAN AIR FORCES 5-12, AVENGER 2-4, BOBBY BENSON 1-13, JET 1-4, CAVE GIRL 11-14, I'M A COP 1-3, RED HAWK 11, STRONG MAN 1-4, THUN'DA 2-6, and one story each in STRAIGHT ARROW 2-55. And, in many of those ME comics that he didn't do most of, were his covers or inserts. A complete set of Powell's work for ME encompasses practically every comic-book genre and demonstrates his mastery of each. These ME comics are the epitome of Powell.

Some idea of what it was like to work in one of the comic-book production 'shops' of the 1930s-1940s era can be gleaned from the many interviews with artists that have been published in the past few years. With respect to Powell's early career, I am indebted mainly to interviews with Will Eisner, some of whose reminiscences I have excerpted below. With regards to his shop in 1939 Eisner said, "...It was the only way I could maintain the large output of product. I was writing some of the stories. We had a writer on the staff, a

girl named Toni Blum. Bill Bossert was also a writer; he later married Toni Blum. We had George Tuska, Jack Kirby, a fellow named Bryant, Lou Fine, Bob Powell; all working there. A whole bunch of tremendous people." (1)

In late 1939, E. M. 'Busy' Arnold, owner of the QUALITY Comics Group, approached Eisner to have him do a comic supplement for the Register and Tribune Syndicate. Eisner sold his share of the shop to Iger and set up his own independent shop to produce the supplement, which was to become the SPIRIT SECTION. Eisner continues, "I opened up a little studio in Tudor City, a two room apartment. Some of the staff agreed to follow me: Bob Powell, Chuck Mazoujian and Klaus Nordling, who had been with us over at Eisner and Iger. And we hired a young studio kid named Kubert. He just helped out at anything (1). 'Busy' Arnold later hired Powell to work for his QUALITY Comics line.

"The shop was an apartment, and we all worked cheek and jowl. The living room was the studio, and the bedroom was my office; I sort of worked apart. And there was a lot of exchange back and forth, a lot of conversation during the day (1)."

The interviewer asked Eisner: "So you wrote everything in the section before the war, except where Powell and Nordling wrote their own material?" Eisner replied, "That's right. I think occasionally we ... there was a writer named Dick French who we would buy stories from every once in a while for 'Lady Luck' and occasionally 'Mr. Mystic' (1).

Powell's longest stint with any publisher was with HARVEY Comics' line, from about 1942 to the late-1950s. Research indicates that his work appeared in almost every Harvey title, either as originals or as reprints, at one time or another. Harvey played the reprint-juggling game so often that it is maddening to try to track down Powell's work through almost 20 years of titles. The Harvey horror titles contained some of the best examples of Powell's art for the genre. The Powell characters, backgrounds, and settings created goose-pimple atmospheres for the plots, which for the most part, were quite good. The surprise, or ironic, ending was the rule for these tales and the Powell art went a long way to heighten the mood.

The POWELL HUMOR

No resume of Powell's work would be complete without reference to his endless bent for injecting humor into his art. All vintage Powell, from the early-40s through the 50s, contained elements of his unique style of humor. I call it unique because I have never seen its equal by any other comic-book artist, either in style, quantity, or in its span of over 20 years. The humor varied; for example, some of his stories in the romance comics were blatant tongue-in-cheek humorous jibes at the subject matter of the genre. On the other hand, 'Chickie Ricks - The Flyin' Fool' stories were always serio-comic adventures with lots of flying scenes and Chickie bumbling through, all while having fun at the villain's expense. Harvey apparently planned to publish a CHICKIE RICKS Comic. House ads in some Harvey titles showed the cover, in fact. It was scrapped, it seems, because I have been unable to find anyone who ever saw one, nor is it listed in The Price Guide.

Another character of the 'Chickie Ricks' type appeared in several issues of Street & Smith's TRUE SPORT PICTURE STORIES. He was 'Slewfoot Jones,' the star pitcher for a bumbling baseball team. He was a gangling, freckle-faced hayseed whose naivete formed the pivot for the story plots. (In order to realize the significance of the following anecdote, one should know that this comic was a 'serious' comic book about sports. The editor was usually on a soapbox preaching fairplay, practice-makes-perfect, and all the other juvenile sports cliches that young teen-agers lap up as part of their hero-worship of sports' greats.)

In issue 4/2 Slewfoot gets off a train and, while ambling through the station, he trips over a suitcase. In a neat 3-panel 'pan-shot' Powell has us follow Slewfoot's gaze slowly upward from the floor ... up the legs ... then a body and breast profile .. then the breasts and face profile ... of a beautiful 44-28-36 movie star. But, what must easily be THE CLASSIC PUT-ON in comics is then perpetrated in these panels, for, emblazoned boldly on the breast pocket are her initials: VD. Over the next pages she and Slewfoot get friendly at a local soda fountain; and in every scene the VD initials are prominently on her bosom. Meanwhile, the story drags on for four more pages of a baseball game (this is sport's comic, remember) before a sport's reporter reveals that VD is the star's name ... Vyvian Doheavee ... 'the screen's gift to men.' How this got past the editor is beyond me -- perhaps Slewfoot didn't have a monopoly on naivete.

One type of comic-art 'put-on,' however, is unique with Powell, and I have termed them 'Powell-isms.' A Powellism is something that he slips into the art, usually subtly, and 'puts you on.' Other comic-book artists do this sort of thing occasionally, where there are people's names on objects in their stories. But Powell was a bit different; his favorite trick was to put his own name or intitials "SRP" in his art, usually the wings or tails of airplanes or spaceships. I have documented a few Powellisms below -- how many others can you find in your Powell collection?

Powell often did something out of the ordinary in the course of producing a story that added an extra dimension to the art. One example appeared in JOE PALOOKA 15, which had Powell's one-shot fantasy strip, 'Atoma.' Atoma was a woman of the future who took a young boy on a tour of her city. One unusual aspect of the story was that there were no backgrounds or incidental art in any of the panels; it was if the entire story was taking place in a vacuum ... in short, it was a true fantasy ... it did not attempt reality. Another aspect of this story which I have never seen anywhere else in comics was the unique layouts for the panels: each page's panels were laid out to form a large, page-size numeral; for example, page 1 = .

Another example of Powell's artistry creating 'atmosphere' was in his use of a 'screened blue' image, which he first used in 'Mr. Mystic.' This is a printing plate photo-engraving technique that, when printed, produces a light blue, 'see-through,' or transparent effect. It is a technique that is very effective in simulating invisibility, which Powell utilized later in his work on The SHADOW.

Other nice items to discover in Powell's art are the relatively rare times when he casts a famous movie star in a stereotyped role in a story. I have

positively identified only two stars, and they are superbly done. In DEAD-END CRIME STORIES (no number, 1949), Powell did a great caricature spoof of Edward G. Robinson as a crime czar, reminiscent of Robinson's many movie roles. Sydney Greenstreet appeared in a story in CAVE GIRL as a crooked lawyer; when I saw his character in the story I immediately remembered his role in "Casablanca." Powell must have had a movie-still on his drawing board when he did this story. I have spotted others that I am sure are stars, but I haven't been able to track down their movie appearances.

NOTES ON SELECTED COMIC-BOOK SERIES

ADVENTURE

AMERICAN AIR FORCES: Powell loved planes and could he draw them. This series was made to order for him. It is obvious that he put a lot of care into it. The airplanes and flying scenes are illustrated with beautifully detailed draftsmanship. The stories involved the Korean War, which held center stage of the world at that time. If you like planes, flying, or aerial combat adventures, then this is your series. This series was the continuation of the JET 1-4 title, as proved by AAF 5, which introduced 'Army Air Force ace, Jet Powers,' who was none other than THE Jet Powers of the JET title. Powell did every comic totally, plus covers, except: 6-pages in number 7 and 7-pages in number 10, which were done by two unknown artists.

BOBBY BENSON'S B-BAR-B RIDERS: This comic was a spin-off from the popular western radio show of the same name. Bobby Benson is a 'boy' cowboy who owns a huge ranch in the Big Bend area of Texas. The time was the present (1950). Along with his four constant cowboy companions (his 'Riders') he becomes embroiled in many dangerous situations, from cattle rustling to tiger hunts. And everywhere is the gorgeous Powell western background scenery.

In the best tradition of that era's Saturday matinee western heroes, Bobby had a comic-relief sidekick, Windy Wales. Windy was, in my opinion, one of the most memorable of the species. Windy was a lanky, bow-legged, yarnin' (windy) galoot. (A bit of trivia: on the radio show, Windy was played by an unknown comedian, Don Knotts.) At the time, I faithfully followed both the radio show and the comic series and I can say with authority that Windy, as drawn by Powell, with his fiery red hair and dishevelled appearance was 'comic relief.'

"The Lemonade Kid" was an interesting costumed hero who appeared in each issue 1-13. He was costumed in a bright yellow and green cowboy outfit and his drink was lemonade. He was a 'cowboy Sherlock Holmes' who beat the badhats as much by mental prowess as by muscle. Because of his status as a 'costumed hero,' his stories provided contrast to Bobby's more straight cowboy stories. This was the way he could become involved with bizarre and imaginative criminals. One of this best stories was in number 4 and involved a master criminal who dressed in a striking Black Widow costume. Powell did a tremendous cover for this issue, showing the Kid battling the Spider in his web. BBBBBR wasn't too far along before a Powellism gets slipped in: In issue number 1, on page 2 there is a freight car of the 'SRP & EPP Line.'

RED HAWK: Powell did one Red Hawk story-in each issue of STRAIGHT ARROW Comics #2-55. In #1 he did a one-page filler. Page counts are, 6-pagers: #2, 7, 18, 20, 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 41, 42. 7-pagers: #3, 5, 6, 8-16, 19, 21, 22-26, 28, 30, 33, 37, 38, 39*, 40, 43-55 (*page 3 of this story was printed out of sequence; the sequence, to read correctly should be: page 1,2,4,5,3,6,7). 8-pagers: #4, 17. Powell did Red Hawk stories in RED HAWK 11 and BOBBY BENSON 13, 14, 15 (see their respective listings in the Index).

In this long-running series Powell reached one of his peaks. If one considers the series as belonging to the genre of "Indian lore," then Powell set the highest standards for any other artist who wishes to do this genre.

Red Hawk was a young Cheyenne warrior. The stories were well written, exciting and imaginative. They were set in the West prior to the coming of the white man, and usually pitted Indian-against-Indian or Indian against the environment. Most of the stories ring true because of the weaving of factual Indian lore into the plots. Because of the number and variety of the stories, it is not possible to describe them all here. However, for those not familiar with the series, I will outline the following 'bait' stories to hook you, all of which appeared in STRAIGHT ARROW Comics.

Issue 27 had the first of several stories whose plots revolved around somewhat bizarre female villainesses (as only Powell could draw them). "The Claws of Death," in issue 27 was about the 'Panther Woman and the Puma Men,' who had a stronghold on an isolated mesa. The story in number 30, "Black Arrow of Death," involved a witch-woman, called Cat Eyes, who took her revenge by strapping victims to large missile-like arrows and then catapulting them from a giant cross-bow. In issue 31 "The Flying Horror" was the 'Flying Cat Woman,' who fell upon her victims by gliding in an Icarus-like costume with huge feathered wings. Issue 35 saw Red Hawk captured by "The Women Warriors," a tribe of Amazon-like Indian women, with their men doing the squaw-chores (a foreshadow of women's lib?). My only comments on this story are: The way Powell drew those female warriors, it would be better to make love, not war.

SCIENCE - FICTION

As he did in stories involving aviation, Powell stood out among artists who did science fiction and space yarns. One reason was the excellence of his technical backgrounds; his machines were so realistic they hummed; you could hear the glassware clink in his lab scenes; his spaceship interiors were functional, not just busy-work. As representational works to show Powell's mastery of this genre I choose: JET, MAJOR INAPAK, and VIC TORRY. All were of such length for Powell to pull out the stops and to indulge in free-wheeling action scenes and vast vistas of art; things that are almost impossible to do in the cramped 4 to 6 pages of the average story.

JET 1-4: JET was a short-lived series that related the derring-do exploits of 'Jet Powers, Captain of Science.' He wasn't exactly a costumed super-hero, but he certainly was a super-doer ... in four issues of JET he saved Earth six times and Mars twice. These comics were science fiction, but most were not of the Buck Rogers type. Rather, they were set in the 'present' with present

technology. Many of the exaggerations were not all pure fantasy, but rather what one might expect with a slight 'surrender of one's credibility.' This type of science fiction, where the events depicted are within the grasp of a decade or two, deserves a rating of very good. When such stories are done by Powell, they rate a superlative. 'Powellisms' brazenly pull your leg on the covers of numbers 1 and 4. On issue 1, Jet's spaceship had ID letters "SR-1;" on number 4 his spaceship had ID letters "SRP-2;" and issue 2 had two similar Powellisms inside. This extremely well done series would be a must for any sci-fic fan ... it is an absolutely must-have for any Powell sci-fic collector. (A detailed analysis of all four comics appears in a 5-page illustrated article that the author did for Bill Black's magazine PARAGON 6. It's all offset printed, with photos of all four covers, and it may be ordered from: Paragon Publications, PO Box 1216, Longwood, FL 32750.

MAJOR INAPAK, The SPACE ACE: A 16-page giveaway comic, all Powell, that involved a flight to the Moon to save Earth from invaders from another world. This comic is one of Powell's better science fiction stories. It's fast paced, lots of action on the Moon, and chock full of great space vistas. The 16 pages gave Powell an opportunity to go all-out with action and backgrounds. A rather pleasant way to take your Inapak Malted Milk Drink.

VIC TORRY and HIS FLYING SAUCER: A 32-page comic, all Powell, that related one complete science fiction story. Vic Torry uses a captured flying saucer to save the Solar System from being overrun by a Mercurian dictator. This comic had a very well written plot and some of Powell's best art. More Powellisms in this one: in one scene Vic's jet plane has "SRP" on its rudder. Because of its length, this is probably THE BEST of the Powell science fiction stories. It was a good story with lots of imaginative, futuristic scenery and exciting camera angles.

ROMANCE COMICS

Ah yes, Powell-fans, I'm afraid our hero earned some of his bread and butter by doing advice-to-the-lovelorn. However, I'm glad to report that the art was of his same high standard. In fact, a few of the stories I have seen were equal to his best, if you can disregard the company they are in. For example, his work in those issues of FIRST LOVE ILLUSTRATED that I have tabulated in the Index are what I would call beautiful vintage Powell art. It reminds me of the great work he did for The SHADOW Comics, e.g., 'The Shadow,' 'Doc Savage,' and 'Nick Carter.' Some of the characters in the FIRST LOVE ILLUSTRATED stories even look like Margot Lane and Nick Carter (seems as tho' Powell was swipin' his own stuff). One story in FIRST LOVE ILLUSTRATED #1 has Powell's special blend of serio-comic art with some Dali-like surrealistic art panels.

MAN IN BLACK SERIES

MAN IN BLACK was an outstanding series that was created by Powell. It spanned 21 years (1945-1966) and appeared on-and-off in various Harvey Comics' titles. In its original format it was "The Man In Black Called Fate." The character, Fate (or Death or Mr. Twilight, his other names), was a clever story-telling

device, since he could either conveniently stand outside the story-panels and narrate the plot-line, or he could enterand actively participate in the story. The early stories were usually related to wartime aviation adventures, with Fate calling the shots between life or death. Fate's role was mellowed in the later stories. In them he was mainly a narrator and he participated in free-for-all frivolity among the various cupids, goddesses, and gremlins who vexed him. These later stories also tended to lean to ironic twists of 'Fate' that changed (or could have changed) history. The Man In Black appeared in: ALL NEW 11, 14; FRONT PAGE 1; GREEN HORNET 31-34; KERRY DRAKE 10, 11; MAN IN BLACK 1-4 (#5 listed in The Price Guide probably doesn't exist); THRILL-O-RAMA 1-3. An excellent, illustrated, in-depth article on this series appeared in Martin Greims' COMIC CRUSADER 17.

GOOD GIRL ART

Good girl art has always been a winning formula in comics, for obvious reasons. As in most other aspects of comic art, Powell excelled at good girl art. No better examples of that genre can be found than in these ME titles: THUN'DA, CAVE GIRL, and AFRICA. Fans ... if your bag is towards bee-yoo-tee-full ba-zoomy white goddesses swinging through the jungle ... then you can't afford to be without these comics. THUN'DA 1 was total Frazetta -- nuff said; but 2-6 were total Powell. CAVE GIRL 11-14 and AFRICA 1 were all Powell, too. He did the covers for them all.

Although Thun'da's mate, Pha, was good girl art, she played minor roles in THUN'DA Comics. For that reason, I will concentrate on Cave Girl. Cave Girl was a statuesque, pneumatic, blonde queen of the jungle. Her costume was a striped tiger skin, which in reality must have been made of wet silk from the way it stuck to her body. Obviously, the Cave Girl strips were designed from scratch to be GOOD GIRL ART ... and they sure were ... what eye-salve! In these stories Powell's heroines and villainesses were all voluptuous -- with a capital V! Their costumes usually consisted of imaginative band-aids.

Cave Girl was introduced in THUN'DA Comics #2, and appeared as a filler strip in 2-6. She got her own comic with CAVE GIRL 11-14. Number 11 is total Cave Girl,but 12-14 each had a Thun'da cross-over filler strip. AFRICA 1 continued the Cave Girl series. This one-shot appears to have been planned to be CAVE GIRL 15, but it was released with the new logo. This one-shot ended the careers of both Cave Girl and Thun'da. Perhaps it was the pressure of the Comics Code, since this was the first, and last, of the Cave Girl sagas to appear under the aegis of that protectorate of youthful morals, The Comics Code Authority. The Comics Code Authority killed good comics, such as these, along with the real trash. More Cave Girl can be found in an illustrated, 16-page article that the author did for Bill Black's magazine FEM FANTASTIQUE 3. It's all offset printed and can be ordered from: Paragon Publications, PO Box 1216, Longwood, FL 32750.

POWELL-ISMS

I have pointed out a few Powellisms above, but I would like to devote this space to a few more of them for your pleasure. As you go through your collection you must keep in mind that they can appear in the most unexpected

places, as these examples will show. These examples will also show to what extent the artists went to poke fun at each other.

CHAMBER OF CHILLS 21, p. 5: An announcer in a radio station is speaking into a mike with call-letters "WSRP."

CHAMBER OF CHILLS 24, splash panel: A horde of shrouded skeletons is attacking a man in the square of an old-fashioned, European village. Way in the background is a dilapidated sign on a building proclaiming "Elect Honest Bob Powell." A sign on another building says "EPP."

DOTTY DRIPPLE 3: "Marty" Epp (as a cool, pipe-smoking, 50s style teen-ager) is in a roller skating contest with Tommy Tween ... Tommy beats Epp and wins a date with Marty's girl.

DOWN WITH CRIME 2, splash panel: A hotel has a neon sign "HOWARD" (Nostrand).

G.I. JOE 8: In this improbable war story a sappy soldier carries an accordion into battle. In the second panel the brand name on the squeeze-box is "Powell."

HI-SCHOOL ROMANCE 39, p. 7: In this love story, Pete Hardy is a champion boxer. A newsboy is seen hawking a newspaper whose headline proclaims "Hardy KO's Siefringer."

WARFRONT 3: In this World War II aviation story a P-51 fighter pilot's helmet has "Siefringer" stenciled on it. A bombardier's helmet has "Nostrand," and a co-pilot's cap has "Epp."

WITCHES TALES 7: They're everywhere in this story. On the splash is Satan raising a flaming ghost out of a grave in a cemetery. One of the tombstones has engraved on it "NOS" (NOStrand), and in the background another stone with "EPP." On another page is a graveyard scene with a tombstone in the foreground ... a large vampire bat is perched on top, and engraved on it is "EPP 1791-1862." Another panel is on a dark street, with the camera angle looking down past the cornice of a building ... slapped on the side of the building is a frazzled handbill proclaiming "Fun at Strand, Nostrand and Epp, Jr."

WORLDS BEYOND 1: Has the initials "SRP" embossed on a doctor's black bag.

GOOD NEWS

Finally, I want to offer some good news to all Powell collectors, in the form of an editorial comment in Kitchen Sink's SPIRIT No. 24, May 1980, page 5: "As for Bob Powell's beautiful Mr. Mystic -- only scattered pages of original art or printer's proofs exist, the bulk having been destroyed by the Quality Comics Group as part of their periodic "house cleanings" during World War II. However, Cat Yronwode is actively seeking to contact people with Mr. Mystic artwork for the purpose of publishing a small collection of Powell's art and she would appreciate it if readers who own originals or proofs would write c/o this magazine (SPIRIT Magazine)."

... PERHAPS SOON ...

BONUS

EDD CARTIER comic-book art work is rare. Some of Cartier's unique and beautiful art can be had as a premium, along with Powell, in several RED DRAGON Comics and TOMB OF TERROR 3 (see Index). Cartier also did two stories plus covers for SUPER MAGICIAN Comics 5/7, 5/8; Powell did not appear in these two comics. To my knowledge, these three titles contain Cartier's only rare appearances in comics.

REFERENCE (1): PANELS No. 1, Summer 1979. Published by John Benson, 205 W. 80th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10024. 36 pp., $2.50. Quotes from ART and COMMERCE, "An Oral Reminiscence by Will Eisner," pp. 12-15.

NOW TO REACH THE BONTO VILLAGE, I'M GOING TO SAVE THEM FROM THESE AMAZONS IN SPITE OF THEMSELVES!
SHORTLY—
THE AMAZONS ARE COMING, BUT DO NOT BE AFRAID! CAVE GIRL WILL DEFEAT THEM AND THEIR WAR ELEPHANTS ALL BY HERSELF!
BEHIND HER COME THE AMAZONS ON THEIR TRUMPETING WAR ELEPHANTS—
IN FEAR AND TREMBLING THE BONTOS AWAIT THAT SAVAGE GALLOP—
THEY ARE ALMOST THROUGH THE JUNGLE NOW! WATCH AND SEE HOW CAVE GIRL STRIKES HER ENEMIES!

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1952

RED HAWK

THREE MEN RACING AGAINST TIME, CARRYING A MESSAGE THAT SPELLS LIFE OR DEATH FOR THEIR PEOPLE! ***BIGFOOT! SLEEPY WOLF! RED HAWK!*** AGAINST THEM IS NATURE AND HER RAGING FURY—THE CRUELTY OF AN APACHE WAR PARTY—AND THE INEXORABLE ONRUSH OF TIME ITSELF! CAN THEY WIN AGAINST SUCH ODDS TO BRING A...

Message For The Chief

DUST CLOUDS SWIRL ACROSS THE PRAIRIE AS THREE CHEYENNES RACE AT BREAKNECK SPEED—
RIDE FAST! WE MUST GET THE MESSAGE THROUGH TO WHITE BULL!
AIE! OR OUR PEOPLE WILL ALL DIE!

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1950

R

SA #51 P.10

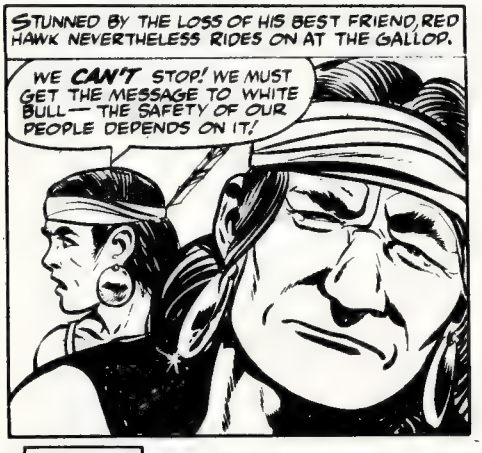
FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION COMES ANOTHER ENEMY...A BAND OF WAR-PAINTED APACHES...
CHEYENNE COUNTRY UP AHEAD!
HU! WE WILL TAKE SOME SCALPS!

UNAWARE THAT THE APACHE WAR PARTY RIDES TO MEET THEM, THE THREE RIDERS REIN IN AT THE EDGE OF THE CHASM...
WE'RE STOPPED! WE CAN NEVER GET ACROSS THIS!
WE MUST CROSS IT— SOMEHOW! IF WE DON'T, WE MIGHT AS WELL FORGET GETTING OUR MESSAGE TO THE CHIEF. WE WILL BE TOO LATE!

SOON THE GREAT SHOULDERS OF BIGFOOT CREAK BENEATH ALMOST INTOLERABLE WEIGHT-
RIDE OVER—BUT FAST! I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I CAN SUPPORT SUCH WEIGHT!
2

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1950

UNDERNEATH, A MOCCASINED FOOT SLIPS—


STUNNED BY THE LOSS OF HIS BEST FRIEND, RED HAWK NEVERTHELESS RIDES ON AT THE GALLOP.
WE CAN'T STOP! WE MUST GET THE MESSAGE TO WHITE BULL— THE SAFETY OF OUR PEOPLE DEPENDS ON IT!

SPURRING TO MEET THEM COMES THE APACHE WAR PARTY!
THEN RIDE FASTER! WE MUST GET THROUGH!
THE APACHES ARE GOING TO CUT US OFF FROM SPEARSHAFT CANYON!

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1950

SA#51 P.IV

HAVE TO RIDE FAST! FASTER! FASTER!
ALONE, RED HAWK FACES THE ONCOMING APACHES—
IF I CAN HOLD THEM LONG ENOUGH, HE'LL REACH THE CAMP! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME, MY PEOPLE MUST LEARN THE NEWS!
IN A MOMENT, THE BATTLE JOINS!
WHILE RED HAWK DEFENDS THE NARROW PASS, SLEEPY WOLF RIDES LIKE THE WIND—
I CAN SEE THE TEPEES NOW!
HE FLINGS HIMSELF FROM HIS LATHERED PONY BEFORE HIS CHIEF!
BAD NEWS, WHITE BULL. BUT BIGFOOT AND RED HAWK ARE PROBABLY DEAD RIGHT NOW, SO THAT I COULD BRING IT TO YOU!
WHEN YOUNG SLEEPY WOLF WAS FINISHED SPEAKING, WHITE BULL CRIES OUT AND WARRIORS RUN FOR THEIR WEAPONS!
HURRY! WE MUST STRIKE WITH ALL OUR MEN. MOUNT YOUR FASTEST PONIES!
THERE IS NO TIME TO BE LOST! HUNTING BOWS AND ARROW QUIVERS ARE SNATCHED UP. MEN LEAP ON THEIR SWIFTEST HORSES! AND THE CHEYENNES RIDE....!
4

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1950

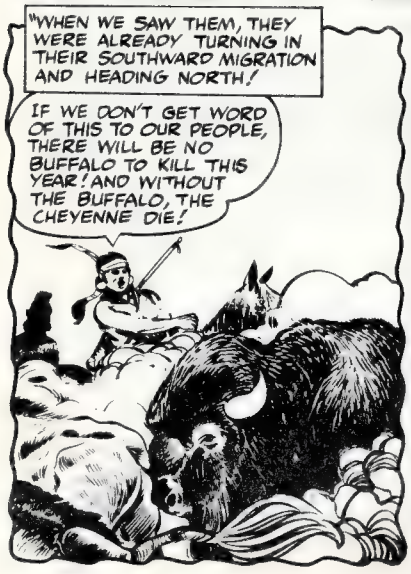
SAFCI 1:13

FOR AN HOUR RED HAWK LIES STILL, GATHERING HIS STRENGTH. TOWARD DUSK HE STIRS AND STAGGERS TOWARD HIS PONY...
BIGFOOT! I MUST FIND BIGFOOT AND LEARN WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM...

5

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1950

"REMEMBER HOW WE HUNTED FOR THE GREAT BUFFALO HERDS, THAT WERE SO LONG IN COMING TO OUR PEOPLE?"
THERE'S NO SIGN OF ANY BUFFALO!
NEVER HAVE THEY BEEN SO LATE!


"WHEN WE SAW THEM, THEY WERE ALREADY TURNING IN THEIR SOUTHWARD MIGRATION AND HEADING NORTH!
IF WE DON'T GET WORD OF THIS TO OUR PEOPLE, THERE WILL BE NO BUFFALO TO KILL THIS YEAR! AND WITHOUT THE BUFFALO, THE CHEYENNE DIE!

THE BUFFALO IS AN ANIMAL ON WHOM THE PLAINS INDIAN DEPENDS FOR LIFE ITSELF. THEY NEED ITS MEAT FOR FOOD, ITS SHAGGY HIDE FOR WINTER ROBES, CLOTHING AND BEDDING, ITS HORNS ARE MADE INTO CEREMONIAL RATTLES, ITS HAIR WOVEN INTO ROPES, ITS SINEWS MADE INTO BOWSTRINGS! WITHOUT THE BUFFALO, THE INDIAN WOULD DIE! IF THE CHEYENNES WERE NOT TOLD THAT THEY MUST RIDE FAST IF THEY HOPED TO GET ANY BUFFALO THIS YEAR, THEY WOULD DIE OF STARVATION AND WINTER COLD!

AND SO THE CHEYENNES MAKE THEIR KILL, AND CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THE COMING WINTER WITHOUT FEAR, THANKS TO THE DARING BRAVERY OF RED HAWK, BIGFOOT AND YOUNG SLEEPY WOLF...
THE END

Copyright © Magazine Enterprises, 1950

PHILLIPS AUCTION BRINGS

PRESTIGE, HIGH PRICES

by Jack Bender

The prestigious Phillips auction galleries of New York brought a new dimension to the collecting of original comic art during 1981.

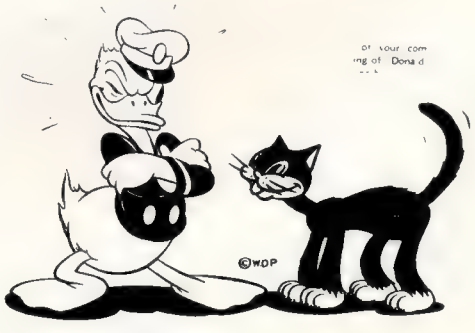
The firm on Phillips Son & Neale Inc., founded in London in 1796, is concidered this nation's foremost auctioneers and appraisers of fine art. Their auctions over the years have ranged from Old Masters to Art Nouveau to posters to postage stamps.

In late 1980, the firm held its first "American Illustrators" auction which included, as would be expected, works by Norman Rockwell, J.C. Leyendecker, James Montgomery Flagg and Charles Dana Gibson, but also a few scattered works by the likes of Milton Caniff and the Disney animation studio.

Caniff by Caniff: The Editors Were Listening

In their catalog for that auction, the Phillips people noted:
"Is illustration really art?
"The growing interest amoung fine art dealers and collectors in acquiring the works of illustrators answers this question in a resounding affirmative...Many illustrators have been favorably compared to the great nineteenth century genre painters, and are now commanding equally strong prices as well as the artistic acclaim due them.

"...They were, in essence, artist-historians of their time.
"These artists (also) served an important role in bringing art, via the printed page, to a large segment of the American people who had little opportunity to attend museums...



"Many museums...(now have)... extensive holdings of original illustrations, while other museums are now forming their own collections..."

Art scholars for some time have recognized the importance of magazine illustrations and comic art in our culture. Not only is it a historical record of our culture, it led to a "spin-off" art type Pop Art, and, of course, superheros like Superman, Batman, the Phantom and Tarzan are America's own versions of mythology.

So it is not surprising that there was so much interest at the 1980 American Illustrators auction in the works of the likes of Caniff and the Disney studio that this year's version of the auction was expanded to include some 140 pieces of comic strip and animation art.

And it was a resounding success, commanding in many cases considerably higher prices than were comon in the collectors market at that time--Though in some cases the items bringing the best prices were not very consistent.

For example, a 1946 "Blondie" daily brought $275 while a more historic 1932 daily of the same strip brought only $175. "Li'l Abner" strips brought fantastic prices for ordinary examples. A 1944 daily brought $350, a 1949 daily brought $225 and a 1973 daily brought $275. "Lil Abner" strips, usually common in the collectors market, go for under $50.

The answer to these wild prices lies in who did the purchasing. In many cases, they were decorators seeking familiar pieces for an office or home. Thus a 1946 Blondie looks more like the Blondie we all are familiar with than one done in 1932. The same must have been the case if a 1973 Li'l Abner daily could command anywhere near $275.

AH DONE WASHED 100 DISHES IN A HOUR. SO AH WORKS MERELY 29 MORE HOURS-AN'-
PRESTO-AH IS THROUGH!!
-HM-THAR'S SOMETHIN' ON MAH MIND-SEEMS AS HOW AH LEFT SOME LI'L OBJECK OUTSIDE---HM--

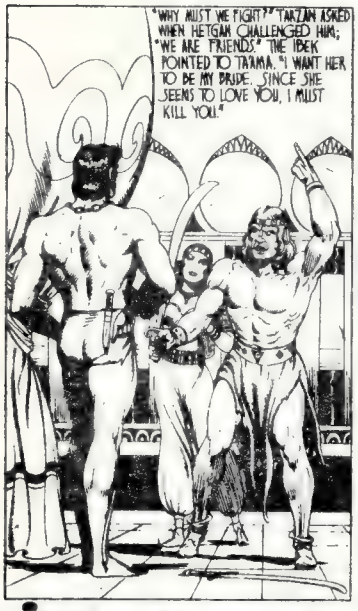
Copyright © King Features Sydn., 1947

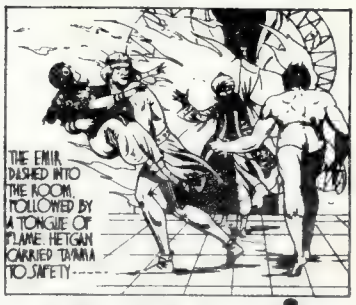
Copyright © King Features Synd., 1948

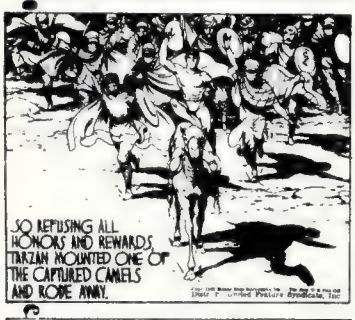
Tarzan

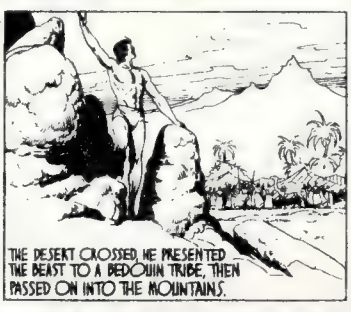
by EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

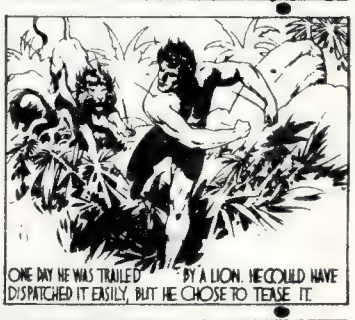
DOUBLE JEOPARDY

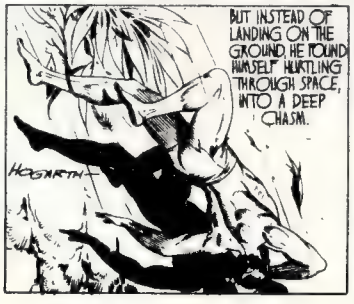

"WHY MUST WE FIGHT?" TARZAN ASKED WHEN HETGAM CHALLENGED HIM; "WE ARE FRIENDS." THE IBEK POINTED TO TAJAMA. "I WANT HER TO BE MY BRIDE. SINCE SHE SEEMS TO LOVE YOU, I MUST KILL YOU."











HIS PLUNGE WAS WITNESSED BY A STRANGE COUPLE. THE MAN SNARLED, "IF OUR VISITOR SURVIVES HIS FALL, I'LL KILL HIM."
NEXT WEEK: THE STRANGE TITANS
4-26-42

Copyright © King Features Synd. 1944

Some of the other bidding was a bit out of line too. A Big Little Book cover painting of The Phantom brought $950, but an extremely rare cel (ink and gouache on celluloid) by Winsor McCay from his 1918 animated film. "The Sinking of The Lusitania," brought only $275. This cell was even inscribed, "This is one of my original drawings" and signed, "Winsor McCay"!

In general, the Phillips auction brought only average or less prices for animation cels, though one, "Donald Duck on the Telephone," did bring $950. Several others did not bring the minimum bid determined by the cel owners.

Some of the other prices realized on pieces more popularly collected included $500 for a 1959 Peanuts Sunday page; 400 for a 1968 Sunday Dick Tracy and $325 for a 1949 Tracy daily; $850 for a 1970 Prince Valiant jousting episode; and $600 for an excellent Hogarth Tarzan from 1944 that included a very large panel. The latter two prices would be considered low in the current collectors market. Two Pogo Sunday pages brought $1400 and $1450, respectively.

It was reported to me that solid bids of around $3,000 were attracted by Little Nemo pages, #2500 for Foster Tarzans and $2100 for Raymond and Briggs Flash Gordons from the 1930s, but these fell below the minimum bid the consignors had set, so the pieces were not sold at the auction.

There was somewhat of a coup for collectors of comic book pages. There was a great deal of interest in a Superman page penciled by Joe Schuster circa 1940, but never completed, and it sold for $850.

Of course, these prices do not really reflect the amounts that owners eventually realized. For example, the owners pay Phillips 10% of the selling price on pieces that brought over $500 and 15% if the price was less than $500. Inaddition, the charge was $30 per illustration if a consignor wished his art illustrated in the auction catalog (which is sold for $12 per copy to potential buyers).

Phillips, in addition to its commission from the consignor, also collects a premium of 10% of the auction price from the buyer of the pieceas, in effect, a finder's fee.

While the Phillips auction probably did not attract the true fan-collector, we should all thank that firm for giving comic art the serious treatment it deserves as atrue American art form.

However, we also probably will be cursing the same organization for pushing some of the prices on the particularly choice art well beyond the reach of most of us. ●

Bob Bindig

to be a character in

STEVE CANYON'S LATEST DREAM STORY.

It all started back in February. Bob drew a personal birthday card for Milton Caniff. He liked it and called Bob to thank him. Later, Bob got a call from Shel Dorf who asked him if he'd like to be a character in "STEVE CANYON".. Bob couldn't believe his ears. He was asked to send Caniff some photos of him self from various angles and later, some action poses. Bob had no idea what Milt had in mind for him.. as it turned out, he was to be a villian, the commanding officer to Cpl. Schickelgruber in World War One.

The story appeared Oct. 31, and Steve knocks him out on November 15th, a short stint in the strip, but for Bob it was the excitement of a kid at Christmas.

The characters name was LUDWIG VON DIGBIN, Caniff switched his last name around for legal purposes.

MILTON CANIFF

Ludwig
von DIGBIN
Kommandant
Jagdstaffel
3

MILTON CANIFF

Späher
29 Aug 1981

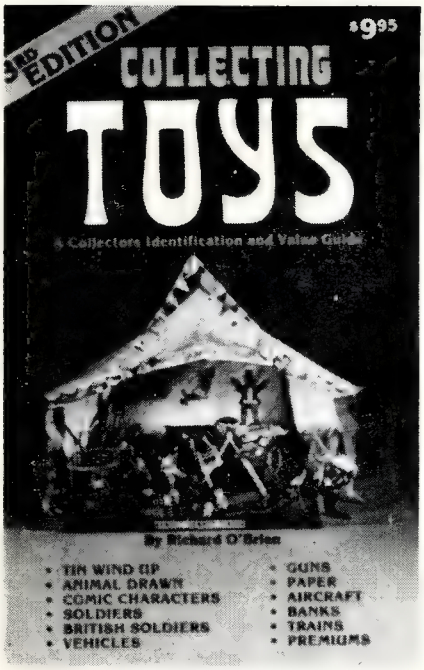
Rap with Ray

RAY FUNK'S COLUMN

Present day gripes in the comic world of advertising; "Please list Alternates", or, "List of alternates will be appreciated". This is well and fine for the various buyers that make purchases from from the sellors lists, only being able to buy a small portion there-in of what he'd like to have. He can easily list alternates, but the G. A. collector that finds only one comic, many times very highly priced encounters a completely different circumstance. To me, this type of message reads, apparently you have the cash to spend on this comic, so you really have no use for the money, so just pick out something else whether you can use it or not, or, if you want to buy from me, you'd better take anything on my list, or just forget it altogether. Possibly, these translations are a bit extreme, but the message is basically the same, so much for that.

The third edition of the book; 'Collecting Toys, w/price-value guide', by Richard O'Brien, Americana Book's, $9.95, is a must have for toy collectors. They are in abundance, as I receive a great deal of mail from them seeking trades, as I was quite active trading comics some years back in order to complete my collections.

Collecting toys is definately on the incline, one look through the Price Guide will convince you of that. Even then, if you are fortunate enough to actually locate some of the toys, chances are slim that you will be able to purchase them at the prices listed in the book.Toy collectors can be just as stubborn when it comes to dropping prices as comic collectors, or any other type for that matter.



O'Brien's publication, "Collecting Toys"

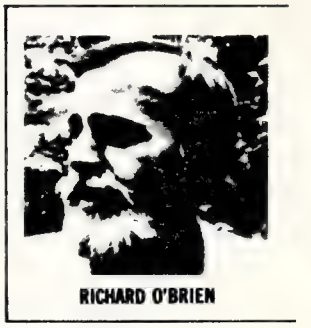
Richard O'Brien also sent me a copy of his first novel, a detective character called "The Hook", and set in the year of 1938. The full title is, "The Hook #1,'The Gilded Canary", A Warner Book #90-882, $1.95 at your favorite newstand. Finding enough time to read the story in depth has been a problem for me, as too many other 'irons in the fire', but O'brien's publisher insisted a bit of sex be included, which was handled tastefully so as not to offend the more intolerant reader. Violence is also handled well and the story is smoothly written, rolling right along, holding the readers interest, especially if he's a died in the wool detective fan.

O'Brien uses some dialog in the story that requires a dictionary close at hand. I've authored a few books myself and generally limit the language to everyday usage type, mostly because I'm not intelligent enough to get over the preferred impact wanted with the more intangable suave large words, though must admit that Richard has succeeded with a polished novel, that is well worth reading.

The story is set in New York in 1938 and has a certain appeal for us older guys that dig nostalgia and detective stories. Like the pulps, a pen name is used and also a stable of writers. The pen name is 'Brad Latham'.

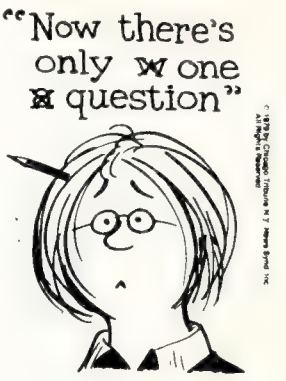
O'Brien's credits are, 'The Hook' # 1 and 3. Number 1 and 2 being the only issues released at this time.

They appeal to three types of readers, nostalgic, sexual and detective.



RICHARD O'BRIEN

O'Brien, whos comic strip 'Koky" was cancelled, can make his claim in the imortality of comic writers, not only with his book of comic covers(The Golden Age Of Comics) but now due to Australia having published his strip in a comic book all its own. The Australia Publishing has many merits not to be found here in America, such as having continuously published the Buck Rogers strips over the years, always returning to the first when catching up to the present run, so that the young readers could always start a collection with the reassurance that eventually they could completely fill it. Now the strip is no longer done there and the old books are quite high priced because of the interest created in it by present day speculators. But in a sence, sense,they were the first ones to really have the foresight to do a publishing of reprints correctly.



To the best of my knowledge, here in the states, the only one to attempt to do a really decent job on reprints was Ed Aprill Jr. The reproduction on reprints today is generally rather poor, however, you have to give them credit for trying.

Ed Aprill brought out the first U.S. decent Tarzan reprint book, The Spirit dailies, Johnny Comet, and Buck Rogers. Ed was on the way to doing an excellent job of filling the needs of many collectors when he met with an unfortunate auto accident that took his life.

At the time of his death, Ed had many books of other comic characters planned, amoung them being the Buck Rogers Sundays, Mandrake, The Phantom, Flash Gordon and Brick Bradford. Another of my old favorites that he put out was "Skyroads". Had Ed lived, I'm sure he would have eventually done books on all the old comics. His passing was a great loss, not only to his family, but the entire comic collecting world. Now there is a lot of good reprint stuff being put out day, but somehow they lack the magic that Ed installed in his publications. Perhaps it was due to the time period, and the fact that he was alone in his determination to see that the best were reprinted starting with the very first issues. True, many of his reprints did not start at the beginning of the strip, but as they were aquired by Ed they would have been done.

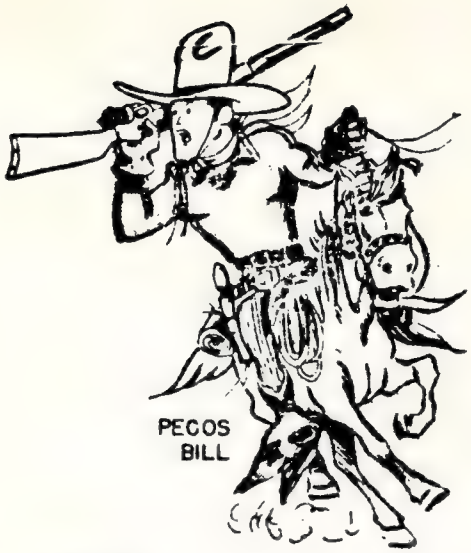
There are a lot of complaints about the Price Guide's high prices on many comics that that do not deserve this rating. The complaints are valid, however the book is still invaluable to the collector as a reference guide alone. The comic book cover reprints in color no-less are excellent, and the cover art was usually the best part of the comic. I still think if the comics don't sell at some of the prices listed, their cost will come down. It's the only way we can fight back, stop paying out-ragous prices and eventually the prices will have to come down.

Blondie comic strip is still comming over great, dispite its creators demise. I notice the little character, Elmo, and cannot but recall Dinny Dimwit from the Winnie Winkle strip that featured Perry Winkle and The Rinky Dinks. Eventually, Dinny proved to be such a popular character, that for some time, he actually was the main star of the Sunday strip. The daily remained devoted to Winnie Winkle herself and her many and constant troubles. The main one thing that I disliked about several comic strips was the spouse dying off only to return later on in the strip.

The new TV show this season titled "The Best of the West" I rate extremely high on my Crap list (excuse the slang expression) but One thing I can't stand is canned laughter, apparently a clue so that the TV audience will know when to laugh. The same can be said concerning the cartoons with canned laughter.. I don't recall Disney , Looney Toons or many of the other old cartoons using this method. The other thing about the show that irks me is its claim of originally. Half the characters are straight from Lil' Abner, only placed in a western setting. I like westerns, and we do need a good one, but I have to pass on this one.

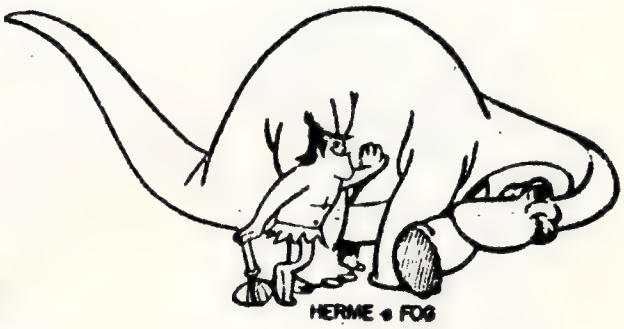
Glad to see Maverick is back and Jim Garner is great, but he is aging and this is bound to detract from the show. I enjoy Garners performance so much that I will abstain from making a comment at this time. Taxi is a good show and also Barney Miller, even love those Miller reruns.

Till next time.....Ray



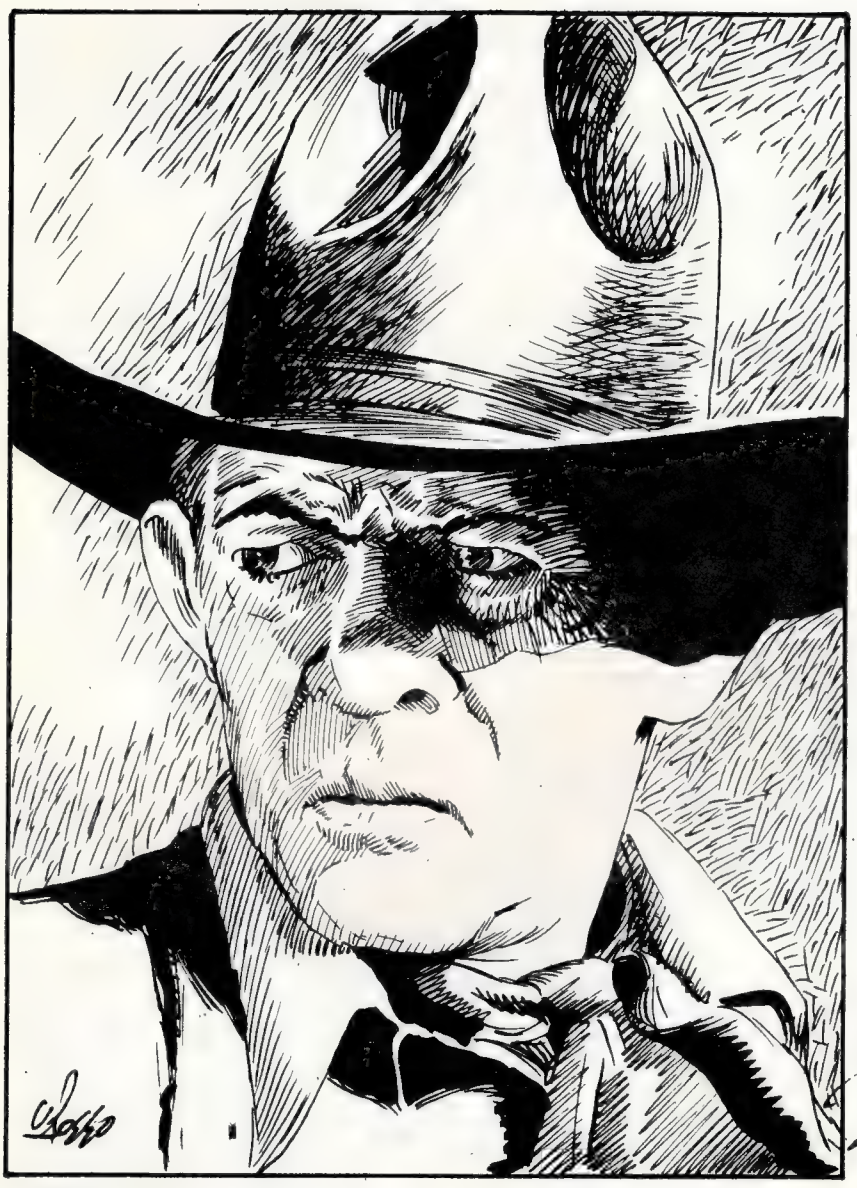
FROM BRAZIL, THE ART OF UMBERT LOSSO

The next few pages contain samples of the art of Umberto Losso of Brazil. This package was sent to us by Mario DeMarco along with a column about the artist from a South American newspaper, unfortunately, it was written in Spanish and we have not had time to translate it. More on this excellent artist next issue.



UMBERTO LOSSO ART

UMBERT LOSSO ART



Umberto Losso

TOM LONDON

THE TWISTER

by Craig Delich

INTRODUCING —
the TWISTER
JUST AS I THOUGHT— THE MEN IN THAT CAR ARE ESCAPING CONVICTS — NOT POLICE
A ROARING CYCLONE SUDDENLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY APPEARS! A DARING FIGURE ROCKETS SKYWARD
AND A MOMENT LATER— PARACHUTES TO THE GROUND! IT'S THE FAMOUS - TWISTER!

Craig and his brother Paul

Having been in comics fandom for a good many years, I've often wondered if comic book writers will ever run out of ideas for new costumed heroes! I thought that many years ago when DC Comics introduced a "new" hero in the pages of the Justice League of America (#64) that strangely resembled another hero of the early 1940's. That new character was called the Red Tornado--the old character was named the Twister.

The year was 1941-- the publisher was Novelty Press, Inc., a rather small (and still, I feel, underated) company,but one that published a great many characters. Some of these were Blue Boly, the Target, Sergeant Spook, Sub-Zero, White Rider and Super Horse, not to mention the immensely popular Dick Cole. There were writers and artists to match: Joe Simon, Jack Kirby, Bob Wood, Malcolm Kildale, Ray Gill, Paul Gustavson, Bob Davis and the immortal Bill Everett. Many of these greats also did work, of course, for Centaur and Timely Publications as well, at the same time.

The June, 1941, issue of Blue Bolt (Vol. 2 No. 1) presented the Twister's very first story, with the art by the late Paul Gustavson. Fans were treated to what might be called "sneak previews" of the strip in various stories of this issue, when a mysterious tornado or wind came along to provide assistance to characters such as Dick Cole, Sub-Zero and Blue Bolt.

The last story in the issue explained all, as readers were introduced to this new hero, who quite adeptly prevented a mass escape from a nearby prison. One of the prisonguards, however,knew of the Twister. Showing the man of wind newspaper clippings of his exploits, the guard asked the Twister to explain his origins.

A fourteen year old boy named Bob Sanders, who lived in Windy Gap "just west of Pine Belt" (wherever that is), was reading Homer's Odyssey in school that fateful day. The main character, Odesseus, had been given two bags of winds by the God of the Winds, Aeolus. Unfortunately for Odesseus, his crew aboard ship opened one of the bags out of curiousity, and let the bad winds loose upon the Earth.

Aeolus told Odesseus that he or his descendants "...must capture the evil influences or forever suffer the tortures of the damned." At this point, Bob Sanders was interrupted by his father, Pete Sanders, and his mother, who rushed into the school house and told the students of a cyclone bearing down upon the school. The Sanders' raced toward the cyclone cellar, but, sadly, Bob's parents were killed. However, Bob was picked up by the whirling twister--a strange feeling came over him and as he collected his senses, he found himself "a strange being...part of the cyclone itself...and able to control it at will!"

The guard astutely assumed Bob to be a descendant of Odysseus, to which he agreed. With this origin explained, the Twister disappeared into thin air. He later appeared at a prison hospital where he convinced the men he captured that he didn't exist!! The final caption warned "Should Tony the Tornado read this story---BEWARE! The Twister will get you in the next issue!"

This story,with excellent art, certainly whetted the appetite for more--enough so that readers more intently questioned the Twister's origin. In Vol. 2 No. 2 (July, 1941), writer Ray Gill sought to more fully explain the origin in a special two-page, illustrated (by Gill himself, most likely) text feature. This page gave a purpose to the Twister: "Realizing the full meaning of his position, Bob saw that he was to fight, not only unfavorable winds, but everything bad and evil. A whirlwind crusade against injustice! With the ability to change into thin air--and to change that air into a throbbing, living tornado--he set forth on the earth to be on hand when needed, to judge what is right and protect it; to judge what is wrong and destroy it!"

The story in this issue, again illustrated by Gustavson, began with "Tony the Tornado" reading the previous issue's warning. Ready to wipe out the staff of Novelty Press for making fun of him, Tony's men told him there really was a Twister. Tony was a New York taxi driver racketeer who had been threating independent cab drivers. The Twister dropped in on him unexpectedly and warned him to leave the independents alone. After mopping up Tony's henchmen, the man of wind disappeared.

Tony was furious and told his men to go out and wreck all of his competitor's cabs. The henchmen do this, but the Twister arrived and captured them. The Twister asked them who it was that was behinh the scheme. Discovering that Tony was to blame, the Twister made another visit to the racketeer, who attempted to shoot the hero. Warning Tony that his body was pure air and could not be harmed the Twister pulled out his weapon--an "air gun"--which was used to explode Tony's pistol. A struggle ensued, during which Tony was knocked through a wall-- the man of wind then discovered evidence in a desk drawer that would convict the mobster and the evidence was turned over to the police.

These first two stories were probably the best in the series, well written and illustrated... both issues also had covers by Bill Everett, making them even more desirable. Unfortunately, the Twister rapidly went down hill. It is interesting to note that the editors of BLUE BOLT made a curious statement in the letter column of that second issue, when they started that comic fans were tiring of the super-powered type of character, and that was why most features in BLUE BOLT were not of that kind. I personally don't know how the editors arrived at such a conclusion, for statistics in 1941 showed super-hero comic sales to be the highest in history. It is interesting also to note that the Blue Bolt's days in costume were nearing an end and the Twis-

ter was to have but five more adventures. Perhaps editorial thinking at Novelty Press was the factor that brought a swift end to the costumed hero--if so, the last five stories featuring the man of wind certainly reflected this policy.

Volume 2, No. 3 (August, 1941); the Twister had a new artisi-(still unidentified by me, but possibly Ray Gill), one that gave the Man of Wind a much more violent and nasty disposition. The Twister's face seemed to be contorted with hatred--in fact, the story reminded me of the fury of an actual tornado! The story took place in a lumber camp controlled by a man referred to as "Big Nick". Nick has somehow mastered control of weird cavemen, who became "hooked" on chocolate bars he fed them. Hearing of this, and angered over the vicious treatment accorded these cavemen, the Twister arrived in camp to warn Nick. More interested in money than threats, Big Nick began whipping the creatures to get more trees cut down, threating to cut off their supply of chocolate. When the Twister interfered, Nick ordered his "workers" to capture the Man of Wind and bury him alive. Bearing a "cyclone gun" the Twister quickly freed himself, flattened Nick, freed the creatures and destroyed Nick's stockpile of lumber, leaving Nick financially ruined.

Twister's fourth appearance in September, 1941 (Vol. 2, No. 4) featured a more subdued hero, who traveled to the everglades in Florida to apprehend a half-breed Creole from Louisana and a notorious bank robber and murderer known as "The Bull." Janice Barra, the daughter of wealthy fruit grower Lemuel Barra, was kidnapped by the Bull and a ransom of over $100,000 was demanded. The Twister appeared on the scene to rescue her, but was captured when one of Bull's men crept up behind our hero and clasped his hand over the Twister's mouth (supposedly, if the Twister could not suck air, he could not assume the form of a tornado!). Thrown into an empty room, ungaged,where he supposedly could not get air, the Twister watched as Bull set fire to the area.

Copyright © Novelty Press, 1941

Copyright © Novelty Press, 1941

Setting up a cyclonic inferno of wind, Twister manages to save the innocent workers and turn Thor over to the police.

The Twister's final adventure, in which he battled an airplane, was in Vol.2, No.7 (Dec.,1941), and was probably the most innovative story of the last five in which he appeared. The story opened with a lone car headed for Washington, D.C., loaded with jewels. Suddenly, an airplane shot at the car, forcing it off the road into a tree. The driver was killed. As the crooks stepped forth to claim the loot, the Twister appeared. Following the airplane, Twister noted that the aircraft lowered a grappling hook down to the crook's car to take charge of the jewels. With great deft, our hero grabs the jewels, making the pilot believe in a double-cross.
W
So the airplane pilot attacks the auto, killing its occupants--then, after landing, the pilot searched for the jewels. The Twister landed with the loot, but was knocked to the ground by the pilot and stripped of the loot. Twister roared after the plane, knocked out the pilot, landed the aircraft and turned the jewels over to the police. He then disappeared. The final box stated; "Yes---he's gone!--Gone to some remote land to continue his airy battle against the powerful forces of evil! Will he return? This will be answered...in future issues of Blue Bolt!"

However--that question has never been answered to this day, as no more was ever heard from this hero. It is sad, in a way, for this character's concept was unique at that time, and showed a great deal of promise to a writer of immagination and innovation, and to an artist who could do the character justice.

Fortunately, Janice managed to break a window in the Twister's prison, and the Man of Wind made short work of Bull and his gang. The inconsistency of the writer's approach to this character was becoming more that the reader could take.

In October, 1941, (Vol.2 No. 5), the Twister turned up in the Painted Desert to battle a notorious racketeer named "Dude" Milton, who was after a fortune in gold supposedly held by "Shady" Smith, a retired prospector. Successfully capturing Smith, Milton prepared to torture the prospector with a bar of red hot iron. The Twister blew in to save him. During the ensuing battle, Milton doused the Man of Wind with gasoline and set him afire. Leaving so rapidly, the flames left behind. The Twister ignited the gasoline can, blowing several members of the gang away. The others are inundated by a sand storm blown up by the Twister and remain buried up tp their necks until the police arrive to arrest them. Milton discovered, much to his disgust, that "Shady" Smith turned in his gold horde in 1933 when President Roosevelt made possession of gold illegal.

The sixth adventure appeared in November, 1941, issue (Vol.2, No.6), in which the Twister must face his only costuned for; Thor, an individual who uses hypnotic trances to force American workers into sabotaging our war effort. The Twister stumbled upon the plan by accident and pretended to be in a trance in order to meet the mastermind behind the scene. Fearing for the lives of the innocent men who are forced to attack him, the Twister allowed himself to be captured and thrown into a deep shaft. Drilling his way out to freedom, the Man of Wind destroyed the machinery responsible for creating the hypnotic trances only to have his foe blow up his underground HQ.

Unfortunately, after his second appearance, it was plain to see that the powers that be were unconcerned about the Man of Wind's future. It is probably just as well he left for good-- when you realize what happened to the Twister by his seventh appearance, maybe "Tony the Tornado" had the right idea after all!

Craig Delich

SHELDON OPPENBERG

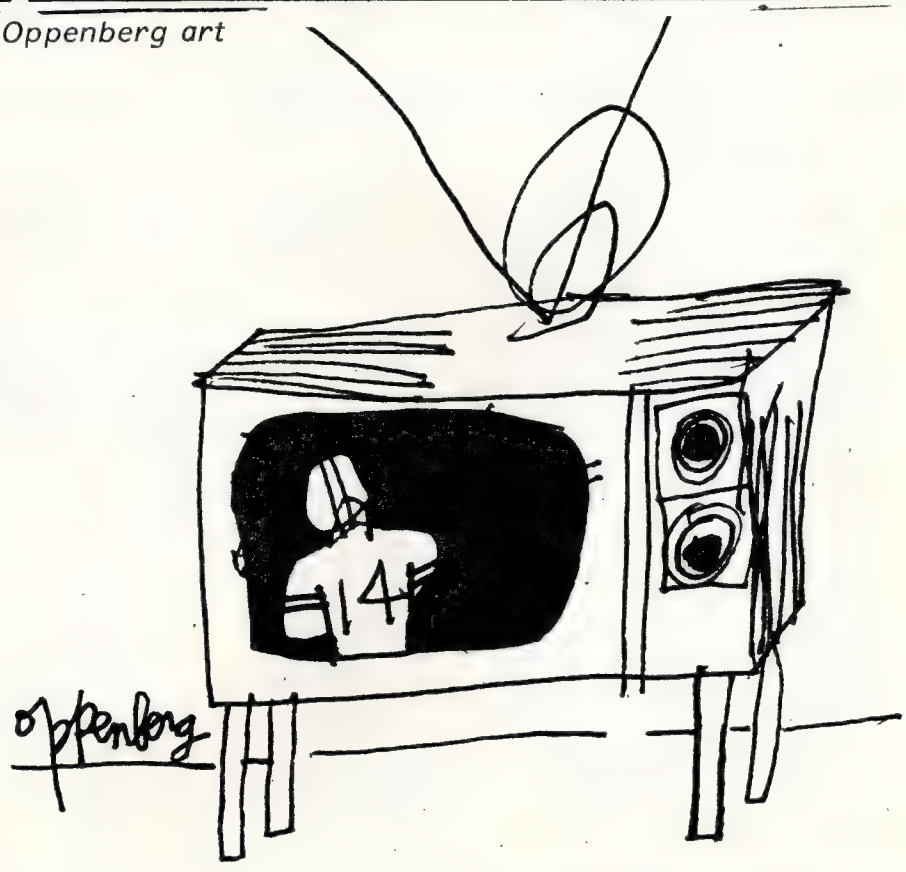
ILLUSTRATION AND DESIGN

Sheldon with his wife Lita.

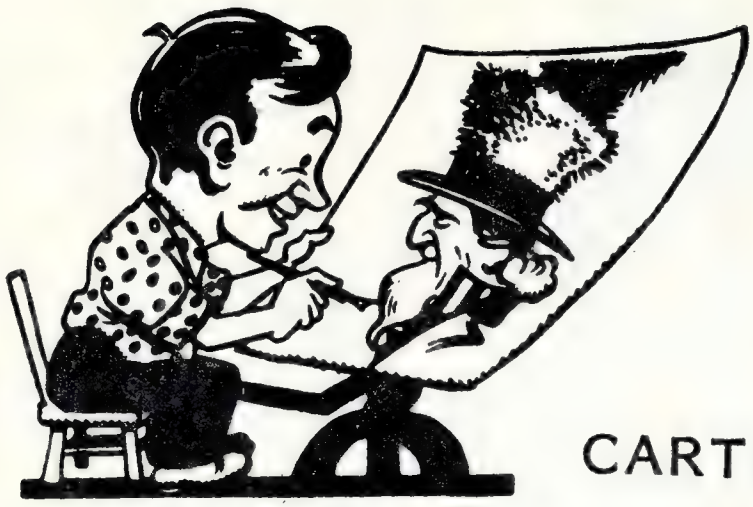
One of the strongest appeals of Sheldon Oppenberg's graphic art is its ability to show the objective world and the world of fantasy in new and provocative ways. Oppenberg works in a highly controlled and precise linear style but his results are neither static nor monotonous. His work is bold, dramatic, crisp, strong in design and has great impact. Sheldon's future certainly bears watching. (The words of Stuart Reisbord, Cartoon Carnival).

Sheldon Oppenberg Art

Sheldon Oppenberg art



More on Sheldon next issue

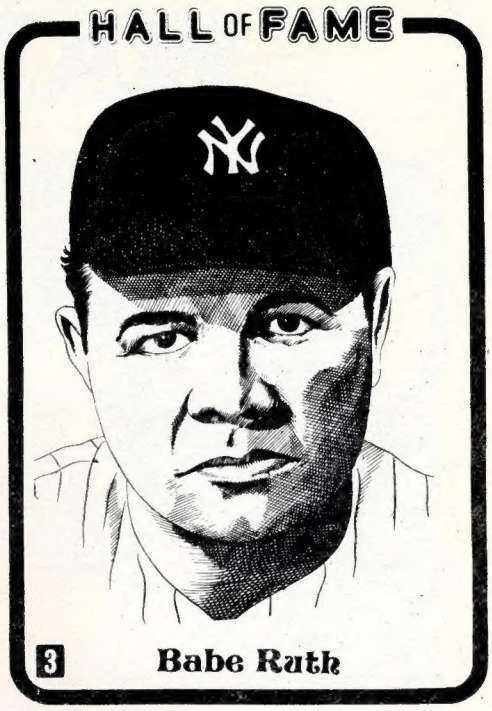


CARTOONIST

STAN SYPULSKI

Stan's specialty is drawing portraits in pen and ink and has spent 28 years as a cartoonist and photo engraver for the local newspaper. He has created many features including "Old Time Comic Creators", which we hope to print more of in future issues.

Stan Sypulski Art



Stan Sypulski Art

MOST WANTED MALE

NUMBER 6

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS:
Born in New York City, raised in Ireland, and educated in England. Date of birth: 19 March 1928. Resigns from ITC, is gassed in his apartment and wakes up to discover himself transplanted to the mysterious The Village, an establishment whose geographical location is always ambiguous and whose inhabitants consist of either rebels, as he, himself, is, or cabbages. While confined in The Village, he creates, stars in, and partly writes and directs the t.v. series THE PRISONER. The series become a loud vocal statement for strong men to resist incursions into their minds. THE PRISONER contains visual power ... a combination of Expressionistic sets and a quick-pace direction which create a kind of fluid sculpture that lives still in the minds of filmgoers everywhere. It is the finest t.v. series to date. He is wanted to do more t.v. series.

IF YOU HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THIS PERSON'S WHEREABOUTS:
Contact: DAVID EDWARD TAEUSCH · Post Office Box 218711 Houston, TX 77218

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Above is a photo of Rick Durell and some of his collection. Rick has been extremely helpful in supplying Near Mint with much needed data on certain Comic books. Rick is currently filling in his collection of Jumgle Comics.

MARC HEMPEL ART